

Procrastination is a Practice Ground for Life Mastery

There isn't a person among us who doesn't procrastinate — put off your work for the day, distract yourself, put off pursuing your dreams, put off putting your work out in the world for fear of being judged.

But here's the thing: most people think that this procrastination is a problem.

Most people stress out about being a procrastinator, and feel bad about themselves for doing it.

Au contraire (that's French, don't bother looking it up, it means you're way wrong).

Instead, procrastination is the *perfect* place to practice all the most important life skills.

Our tendency to procrastinate is exactly how we'll see how our minds work, and learn to be better at all the difficulties of life. Because life will always have these difficulties, no matter how much we'd prefer to avoid them, and how we respond to them will determine everything.

Let's work on our responses to the hardest things in life.

How We Usually Respond

When we procrastinate, this is the usual process:

1. We have something difficult or uncomfortable to do.
2. We don't feel like doing it, because it's difficult, uncertain, uncomfortable.
3. Our minds habitually turn away from this task, and find a more comfortable, certain thing to do, like watching videos or playing games or checking email or social media.
4. We run to the easier thing, and then put off even thinking about the other thing.
5. We feel bad that this happens, and start to form a negative image of ourselves. We rain harshness and criticism upon our psyche.

This makes us less likely to do better the next time around. It's a vicious cycle, I tell ya.

We can learn to do better.

Procrastination is an Opportunity, Not a Suckfest

So what should we do instead? Ideally:

1. We set a hard task before us.

2. We feel the difficulty, but see this as a signpost that we're pushing into uncertain ground.
3. We relish the opportunity to push into uncertain ground, and dive in with gusto. (I love the word "gusto," btw.)

But that's not where we are. We have to practice in this way:

1. Set a hard task, feel like procrastinating because it's uncertain and uncomfortable ...
2. Start to procrastinate by going to something easy.
3. Once we've switched over and noticed that we're procrastinating ... **we pause**. This Pause is the key to everything.
4. We see this Pause as an opportunity to practice a key life skill, and we light up with joy. And yes, gusto.
5. We practice with discomfort and uncertainty. What does it feel like? Is it horrible? Can we work in the midst of it? Can we open up to the discomfort of it all, embrace the uncertainty, and see it as a beautiful part of what we're doing?

Slowly, through this practice, we can get better at not running, at staying with the discomfort, at embracing it all, at being patient and joyful in the middle of chaos and the unknown.

Commit yourself to this practice. You'll find it life-changing and gorgeous.

Practicing with Discomfort & Uncertainty

So you are in the Pause. And you see that you have a chance to practice with discomfort and uncertainty.

Here's what you do.

You turn toward the feeling — the physical feeling in your body, not just a mental idea of it — and see how it feels. Where is it located in your body? How would you describe the sensation? Can you give it an energy, a color, a sound?

You stay with the feeling, with curiosity. You surrender to it, with trust in yourself. You allow it to be there, with acceptance.

Then you go forth and do the work. The hard thing. The thing you're completely uncertain about. And accept the uncertainty as part of life, as part of the mission you're on, because no worthy mission will be fully certain. No hero sets out on a journey knowing how it will end. You're that hero, and yes, you're completely up to this mission.

You do the work, notice the discomfort, allow it to be there. You notice your urge to turn

away and run, and you don't follow the urge.

You mess up, and start all over again, like the goldarn hero that you are. You fall down a thousand times, get up two thousand. You are courageous, inspirational, and stronger than even you believe.

One step at a time, you're expanding your comfort zone, your zone of genius, your hero range. And with each step, you're getting stronger, and inspiring the world to do the same.